

Aborns Score With "Jewels of The Madonna"

Excellent Production of Wolf-Ferrari's Opera at the Century Captivates First American Audience to Hear It in English.

By Sylvester Rawling.

THE Aborns last night scored the success of their season of Opera in English at the Century Opera House by their production of Wolf-Ferrari's "The Jewels of the Madonna," sung in the vernacular for the first time in America. There could be no mistaking the temper of the audience. When it was not spellbound it was clapping its hands vehemently. For the first time since the house was opened a month ago it lost its reputation for continence. More than once, carried away by enthusiasm, it broke into applause that would better have been saved for the fall of the curtain. Fortunately for the cause, the Aborns have pledged themselves to present a different opera each week. Otherwise "The Jewels" would likely be kept on for an indefinite run.

Perhaps the experience with "Lohengrin" not properly prepared, was responsible for the pains which, manifestly, had been taken to present "The Jewels" adequately. Three thousand dollars, it was said, had been expended in extra rehearsals. The money was well spent; for if the performance left anything to be desired it was highly noteworthy. If the pitch were not more perfect, if the time were not more precise, the musical intent of the composer, in the main, was faithfully carried out. The orchestra, at times, found itself and deserved respect even though it played too loudly at times. The dramatic interpretation was admirable. It need not fear comparison with that of the Philadelphia-Chicago Opera Company, with which we are familiar. To Mr. Albertini and Mr. Posternack and Mr. Verardo, who looked after the stage and chorus work, no less than to Mr. Sennel, who conducted, thanks are due.

The story, familiar to readers of this column, is not a pleasant one, with its tale of the best passions and the set of sorcery which is its principal motive, but Wolf-Ferrari's music fits it. As Richard Strauss's music fits "Salome," it is wonderfully descriptive; it grips the imagination, and none of it is very beautiful. Why shouldn't the composer of the "Secret of Susanna" and "The Inquisitive Women," with all their charm and distinction and Montmartre flavor, have a thing in the school of the modern verities such as Macagni and Leoncavallo?

Little was lost and much was gained by presenting "The Jewels" in English. On the whole, the best example yet shown of the Aborn Company's ability to sing in the vernacular. Some sneering was heard between the acts over Gennaro's blunt exclamation: "He's the most notorious blackguard in the quarter." But why? Except that everybody understood it, while few would know the meaning of the Italian text. Gustaf Bergmann presented a fine impersonation of Gennaro, the blacksmith who stole the jewels for the girl he loved, and he sang well. His English was excellent. Elizabeth Amaden, as Matheia, the girl, also acted well and most of her singing was attractive although her enunciation of English was indifferent. Louis Kreidler was good as Raffaele, the Camorrist who compelled Matheia to love him; Kathleen Howard

was altogether satisfactory as Carmela, Gennaro's mother; our old friend Francesco Daddi, introduced to us by Mr. Hammerstein, but now of the Chicago Opera Company, lent for the occasion, was excellent as Biagio, and Albertina March danced splendidly. There are some thirty odd separate characters in the opera, all well taken, and the chorus both acted and sang well. The scenes were admirably conceived and set and the procession was well arranged, but the figure of the Madonna was preposterously tall.

85 Remark About Skirt. CINCINNATI, Oct. 15.—John Kelig, a saloonkeeper, who is alleged to have loudly remarked that a skirt worn by a woman near him on a John street car had not been washed for three months, was fined \$5 and costs on a disorderly conduct charge to-day.

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